

12-4

Christianity and Society

THE CHANGE IN MARXIST DIALECTIC

by

EDUARD HEIMANN

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND THE DISPOSITION
OF GOODS

by

PAUL L. LEHMANN

RETHINKING BRITISH IMPERIALISM

by

IAN CROMBIE

CORRESPONDENCE

AUTUMN 1947

40 CENTS

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

A Quarterly devoted to Christianity and Social Reconstruction

PUBLISHED BY THE FELLOWSHIP OF SOCIALIST CHRISTIANS

THE FALL CONFERENCE

The annual fall conference of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians is scheduled for New York City, the afternoon and evening of October 30 and all day October 31. The program features addresses and discussions on various aspects of American and international social problems. Detailed announcements will be mailed to members of the Fellowship or may be secured from the Secretary.

Editor

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Editorial Board

EDUARD HEIMANN CLIFFORD STANLEY RICHARD W. DAY A. T. MOLLEGEN
JOHN C. BENNETT ROGER L. SHINN WINNIFRED WYGAL
RONALD PRESTON (England)

Executive Committee Fellowship of Socialist Christians

B. APELIAN JOHN DANIEL RICHARD W. DAY EDUARD HEIMANN
VERNON HOLLOWAY CHARLES KEAN HERBERT KING FRANKLIN LITTELL
A. T. MOLLEGEN JAMES MUILENBURG ARNOLD NASH RALPH READ
REINHOLD NIEBUHR NORMAN SIBLEY EDWARD TATE WINNIFRED WYGAL
JOHN CARTMELL, *Treasurer*

Subscription Rate: \$1.50 per year; 40c per copy

4 Shillings per year in England

7 Shillings and Six Pence in Australia

Published Quarterly

Mrs. Nola Meade, Secretary, 3041 Broadway, N. Y. C.

English Agent: Ronald Preston, Annandale, North End Road, London N. W. 11

Australian Agent: Rev. H. P. Reynolds

Box 189, Goulburn, N. S. W., Australia



CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

VOLUME 12

Number 4

EDITORIALS

American Wealth and The World's Poverty

We are exporting goods worth twelve billion dollars in excess of our imports. Every other nation is trying desperately to find sufficient credit or to achieve sufficient exports to pay for what it has to buy in the outside world. It is this disparity between American wealth and the poverty of the world which creates our moral problem and the world's economic problem.

The Marshall plan has not yet been spelled out; but it is obviously an effort to solve this problem. As is always the case in international relations, what is called for is not an act of benevolence but of wise self-interest. Our own health is involved in the task of restoring the world to health. We are in danger of perishing in surfeit while the world perishes in hunger. The deterioration of the European economy has progressed so rapidly that it has become imperative to hasten the plans for aid before winter conditions set in. Europe, including Britain, may face greater deprivations this winter than last year. We may expect the usual arguments against this aid. We will be accused of playing Santa Claus to the world. A wing of the Republican party, which has never been able to extricate itself from its isolationist illusions, may be counted on to oppose any generous aid. This wing represents that part of the American business community which seems totally unacquainted with the facts of a modern interdependent world. Its sentiments were voiced in the recent American Legion convention, where

only the intervention of Mr. Harold Stassen saved the resolution in favor of the Marshall plan. This Legion convention, where aging playboys tried to recapture the memories of their soldierly youth by childish planks was, incidentally, a rather sorry spectacle of the spiritual quality of American life in a tragic age. We can only hope, and we have indeed some right to assert, that the Legion is not as representative as it claims to be. It has fortunately been unable to impress the veterans of the more recent war, who are staying out of it in larger numbers.

The debate in congress on the Marshall plan will undoubtedly plumb some sodden depths of American stupidity. But the plan will finally carry, partly because those who hate Russia will vote with those who have some knowledge of our responsibilities to a needy world and of our own perils in such a world. The Marshall plan is, of course, only a beginning. For the next decades the peace and the health of the world will largely depend upon the capacity of America to develop moral and political imagination, commensurate with its power and privilege. One test of the adequacy of this imagination will be whether we take economic measures which are adequate for the grave situation.

A more difficult test is whether we can refrain from trying to force our own, rather too libertarian ideas of democracy upon an impoverished world, which is moving toward socialism but does not want to move toward communism. Whether it is force into communism by desperation de-

pendes partly upon our ability to discern the affinities between our type of democracy and the socialistic democracy which Europe is developing. It is indicative of the limits of the human imagination that while a wealthy nation, such as ours, wonders whether the socialistic democracy of Europe is worthy of its support, the socialists of Europe are embarrassed by the necessity of receiving support from a capitalistic democracy, which is so open to criticism by communist propaganda.

The fact is that a nation, such as ours, which has achieved the hegemony in the community of nations, is not ideally equipped to match moral leadership with the power which our wealth has given us. We will attain some degree of moral leadership only as we recognize that our most cherished political ideals are not so much the final norms of politics as the characteristic prejudices of a very privileged nation.

British and American Ideologies

For a long time British and American negotiators have been conferring upon the problems of coal production in the Ruhr. The negotiations may have reached a conclusion before these lines reach the reader; but the problems which confronted the negotiators have permanent significance and the respective attitudes of the two nations toward the problems will continue to be indicative of the virtues and vices of both Britain and America.

The key to the whole of European economic revival is coal production in the Ruhr where, up to the present moment, only 50% of pre-war production has been achieved as against 75% production in the French occupied Saar and the American occupied, but much smaller, Bavarian coal fields. Ostensibly the conflict between Britain and America is on the question of socialization. The British government, true to its socialist convictions, wants to socialize the Ruhr coal fields. The American government, conscious of the almost pathological devotion of the congress and

a goodly section of the American people to "free enterprise," has opposed socialization. This puts our nation in the unfavorable light, in which it finds itself so frequently in these days, of trying to force capitalistic forms upon a European continent, which is, on the whole, devoted to the socialist rather than either the capitalist or the communist ideal.

There is no question but that Britain is ideologically right. The slowness in socializing the Ruhr coal fields tends to destroy the prestige of a socialist occupying power among the people of Germany and to give the communists a new ideological advantage. But the American authorities are not as completely wrong as they would appear to be in the labor press of Britain or in the Soviet press. It is the contention of the American authorities that, for the moment, the question of ownership is not at all important. They do not propose to hand the coal fields back to their private owners. They merely want to postpone the whole issue and center upon the managerial problem of getting the coal out of the pits. To do that requires modernization of machinery and more powerful incentives for the miners who mine the coal. These miners were originally expected to reach normal production on empty stomachs. Gradually their rations have been increased and various extra privileges have been added. But these incentives have not been generous enough to give the miners either the physical strength or the spiritual will to mine at a normal rate. Absenteeism has run very high. A story may help the reader to understand what the problem of absenteeism is in the fantastic scarcity economy of Germany.

This is the story of a Ruhr miner who was brought before the authorities for a record of 50% absenteeism. "The cause of my absence," said the miner, "is my hen." Upon being asked to elucidate the meaning of this curious excuse, he said: "If I take good care of my hen I can count on four eggs a week from her. Four eggs a week are worth more on the market

than my whole weekly wage. But the hen has to eat well to keep up that record. So I take off three days a week to forage food for my hen."

There is of course no reason why the Ruhr mines should not be socialized and at the same time the managerial problems, which impede full production, be also solved. But it is a fact that at the moment the private ownership of the mines has nothing to do with the failure to solve these problems, because the private owners have nothing to do with the management of the mines. Furthermore it is also a fact that there is a disposition among socialists, both British and German, to imagine that the socialization of the mines will automatically solve the problem of getting coal out of the mines.

The American fear of socialization represents what is worst in American political life: Our almost fantastic devotion to the principles of a liberal capitalist economy, which is dead beyond hope of revival in Europe and which is probably dying even among us. The American insistence upon efficient production represents what is best in our economic life: our technical efficiency and our elaboration of ever more successful schemes of production. There are innumerable managerial problems in every industrial process which are not automatically solved by the socialization of the process. It is the romantic streak in socialism which prompts socialists to assume that the form of ownership alone will solve every problem of efficiency in management.

This conflict between Britain and ourselves therefore neatly symbolizes the characteristic virtues and vices of each nation. Britain is politically wiser than we are; but its industry is technically backward compared to ours. This technical backwardness is not due to British socialization, as our conservative papers would like to have us believe. But neither is it automatically overcome by socialization. The British are in fact politically so competent that they are under the constant temptation of solving technical problems politi-

cally. We, on the other hand, are technically very efficient and politically not too wise. We are under the temptation of trying to solve political and moral problems technically. We think that the slogan "More production" will solve every political issue. It may solve the problem of inflation immediately, but it will not solve the more ultimate problem of deflation. We could, as we have done before, create a depression by producing too much, or rather producing more than our people can buy with their share of the productive wealth. Britain and America ought to pool their respective forms of competence, rather than set them in opposition to each other.

The National Manufacturers Association and the Clergy

The National Manufacturers Association publishes a special little paper, *Understanding*, which is "devoted to cooperation between clergymen and businessmen." It is as neat a trick in special pleading as could be found anywhere. In a recent issue the paper commends the NAM tax reduction program to its clerical readers. The program envisages tax reductions totalling three and a half billion and designed to give "maximum tax relief to all citizens." Income tax in the lowest brackets would be limited to 12%, and then would rise gradually to "a maximum rate of 50% on incomes of \$100,000 and over." The program would also give husband and wife the right to "divide their income in reporting income and computing individual income taxes." This means, of course, that all high surtaxes could be avoided by the simple expedient of pretending that the wife earned half of the husband's income.

The program is presented with a tremendous pretension of fairness to all income classes. One hopes, therefore, that some of the clerical readers will have the wit to ask why, if a graduated income tax is fair for incomes between \$2,000 and \$100,000, this principle suddenly becomes

invalid after the limit of \$100,000 is reached. The program is meant primarily to give tax relief to the highest income brackets. Unfortunately the readers of the journal seem about as naïve as the editors expect them to be. Quite a few readers express their gratitude for the wisdom of its pages, promise to use some of the material in their sermons, and ask for permission to republish its cartoons. Excerpts from sermons which prove the relation between the Gospel and "free enterprise" are also published. The idea of the National Manufacturers Association as a fount of wisdom for Christian preaching proves that there are depths of futility in some Christian pulpits even deeper than we had imagined.

Two Forms of Utopianism

There is a curious pathos in the conflict between the western and the Russian world. The western world, though partly Christian, is primarily informed by the secular religion of faith in progress. The Russian world is animated by the secular creed of faith in redemption through revolution. The conflict is of course something more than an ideological one. It is a conflict, or at least tension, between two great centers of power, which might mistrust each other even if they had no ideological chasm between them.

But insofar as the conflict is ideological, each side is involved in a situation for which its creed offers no source of understanding. The liberal creed of progress assumes that men are progressing toward higher and higher forms of social life and more and more inclusive loyalties. The Nazi rebellion against a world community was difficult to explain in terms of this faith and was usually put down as a mysterious reversion to barbarism, which would not finally impede the onward march of humanity toward world community. Now the liberal world is confronted not by a cynical, but by a utopian foe, who also believes in world community, not by evolution but by revolution.

The Russians on the other hand believe that the capitalist world, though sworn to enmity against communism, will finally be vanquished because capitalism is subject to successive crises which will undermine its strength and make it ripe for conquest. The stubbornness with which the Russians resist, and refuse to come to terms with, a technically superior foe can only be explained by their hope that this foe will finally be weakened by economic crises and become more manageable. One of the primary perils of war actually consists in the possibility that Russia may underestimate the residual health of a capitalist society and challenge it, despite its technical superiority, in the hope that what the communists call the "inner contradictions" of capitalism will assure the victory of communism.

In other words two secular religions of world redemption are in conflict with one another. One can not deny that there is a special pathos in a conflict in the world community between two political forces each of which underestimates the complexities of history and is blind to the truth which the other side holds, and both of which fail to understand the tragic character of human history. The communist creed of world redemption is the more dangerous because it is informed by a hard utopianism, while the liberal world is informed by soft utopianism. Hard utopianism might be defined as the creed of those who claim to embody the perfect community and who therefore feel themselves morally justified in using every instrument of guile or force against those who oppose their assumed perfection. Soft utopianism is the creed of those who do not claim to embody perfection, but expect perfection to emerge out of the ongoing process of history. The soft utopians are obviously not as dangerous and fanatic as the hard utopians; but they are at a disadvantage in their conflict with the hard utopians because they do not understand that history makes the problems of man's togetherness more, rather than less, complex. Many of them are still dreaming of creating a

ideal world government without answering the question how we could beguile the Russians to accept its authority, or for that matter, how it could get past the United States Senate. Meanwhile we permit political realism to be monopolized by our generals, who recognize that we are involved in a power struggle and assume that we are involved in nothing else. By seeking to protect the western world merely through superior power, they aggravate the mistrust between Russia and the West. Our idealists lack the realism which recognizes the immediate perils of our existence. And our realists are completely blind to the more ultimate dimensions of the tragic conflict in which we are involved. The Russian realism, on the other hand, is informed by the kind of dogmatism which underestimates both the genuine desire for peace in the western world and also the residual political health of the democratic nations.

In such a situation no peace can be guaranteed; but war is not inevitable. The Christian faith could achieve a new relevance to our immediate issues if it should help to open the eyes of both hard and soft utopians. There is small prospect, in fact, of the Christian faith leavening the lump of hard utopianism. But it is still a force, though a minor one, in the democratic world. In that world it might persuade us to recognize the tragic character of the vicious circle of mistrust in which two schemes of world redemption are involved. It might prompt us to combine with our loyalty to our own ideals of a democratic civilization some sense of an overarching common human predicament in which both communists and democrats are involved. It might thus assuage our fears and hatreds against communism without relaxing our immediate defenses against its immediate perils, but also without placing our whole reliance on such defenses. It might finally prompt us to achieve a measure of serenity even in an era in which it has become apparent that no complete security against atomic destruction can be achieved. For one of the

greatest perils for both the Russians and ourselves lies in the hidden and unacknowledged fears of catastrophe which prompt us to hysteria. It is not that we refuse to acknowledge the actual peril of atomic destruction. We refuse to admit the more general problem arising from the fact that all human life is insecure and that the power of modern man has aggravated and not mitigated this general insecurity. Faith does not of itself solve any particular political issue. But a genuine faith which transcends all vicissitudes of nature and history enables men to live with the kind of courage which must enter into all particular solutions.

Moslem and Hindus

The Moslems are butchering Hindus and Sikhs; and the Sikhs and Hindus are butchering Moslems. The two new states of India and Pakistan are not organized for military conflict. But already more people have been murdered in these conflicts than in some wars. Gandhi's fast against this ferocity seems to have been unavailing. This new chapter in Indian affairs ought to be instructive to quite a few of our ideologues. Where are the people who thought that Hindu-Moslem animosities were merely the product of British imperialism and would disappear with the end of British rule? And where are the people who thought that Gandhi's pacifism had created a new and milder type of civilization with which we could not compare ourselves? And where is Professor Northrop, the author of *The Meeting of East and West*, who believes that the orient generates the spirit of charity in its mystical religions, far superior to any moral quality in the western world? And where are the proponents of "religion," any kind of religion, as against secularism? And where are those who think that "religion," any kind of religion, is fruitful of brotherhood?

There are certain minor ethnic differences between Hindus and Moslems; but

they are not sufficient to be apparent to the naked eye. Even now Hindu and Sikh mobs, as they overrun trains, looking for their victims, must look for the mark of circumcision, to make sure that their intended victim is really a Moslem. No, this is a religious war. The fierceness and brutality of it is explicable only in terms of its religious motivation. One can understand once more why in the heyday of secularism it was thought that the decay of religion would of itself cure most ills. The idea was erroneous, particularly since a secular culture bred new types of religious animosity. Nevertheless it must be admitted that nothing in the western world quite compares with the religious hatred and bloodlust which has been unleashed by the organization of these two oriental states.

Perhaps a few other types of ideologues might profit from the lesson which this new and sad chapter of history is teaching. Those, for instance, who think that the maintenance of public order is a simple thing and do not recognize to what degree the peaceable life of man with man requires the restraints of a common tradition, a modicum of mutual trust, a system of legal and juridical checks, and a dozen other internal and external forces of order. For these Hindu-Moslem conflicts reveal what a cesspool of animosity and hatred the human heart can be. They prove that Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas were not as wrong as some moderns think in declaring that any kind of order and justice must be appreciated, lest a too rash effort to alter it might lead to confusion and anarchy.

Perhaps the people of India, who have for years been able to evade recognition of their own faults and problems by making the British rule responsible for every ill in their life, will also learn through bitter experience that men suffer not only from the sins of others but from their own sins, and that it is dangerous to attribute all our ills to the lust of others. Perhaps one of the worst features of imperial rule,

whatever its virtues, is that it prompts precisely this illusion and this form of self-righteousness among the ruled.

The Third Party

Henry Wallace is talking increasingly about the necessity and desirability of organizing a third party. The probable organization of such a party will give us a nice symbol of how the ideal and the real are related in political life. For there is no question of the necessity of a third party. The Democratic party is too ambiguous to express the will of the vast majority of voters who give it victory at the poles. That is the ideal side of the picture.

The real side is that the communists would like a third party which they can manipulate. At the present time they also are in desperate need of a Republican victory for their propaganda campaign in Europe. Even liberal Americans are hardly able to understand how much the Republican victory in the congressional elections, and the emergence of Senator Taft as leader in the Senate, and the passage of the Taft-Hartley act, aided the communist propaganda campaign against us in Europe. Now the best way of assuring a Republican victory is to run Mr. Wallace on a third ticket and divert about two or three million votes from the Democratic side.

The third party, if formed, will declare of course that the Democratic party is as reactionary as the Republican party, and there will be enough truth in the charge to make it quite plausible. But the real reason for the third ticket, as far as the communists are concerned, will be precisely that there is still some difference between the two parties and that America will be much more discredited in Europe if it wears a Republican mask than if it wears a Democratic one. Whether Mr. Wallace finally lends himself to these rather obvious communist manipulations depends upon the depth of his resentments against Mr. Truman and the breadth of his political romanticism.

THE CHANGE IN MARXIST DIALECTIC

By EDUARD HEIMANN

It is well known that the Hegel-Marxian dialectic differs from the dialectic which has been known throughout the history of philosophy in that it is one, historical, all embracing, and progressive dialectic. History leads mankind from primitive beginnings through successive conflicts to ever higher forms of life, each of them resolving on a higher plane the conflict from which it sprang and giving rise to a new conflict to be similarly resolved, until finally, in an all-inclusive form, no possibility of further conflict is left; the dialectic stops and all the successively developed possibilities of man are preserved and combined in a supreme synthesis. The strange thing about the Hegelian dialectic is that the majestic effort of dialectical world history is supposed to find its final objective and fulfillment in the Prussian state, of all things. To Marx the state of the bourgeois era is still a dialectical stage of the development, even one where the dialectical conflict is particularly conspicuous, because the contending parties are now arrayed in two comprehensively unified opposing fronts for the final battle, which will destroy the army of the oppressors and usher in the "kingdom of liberty" and harmony forever.

The Russians today use the Marxist dialectic as their official doctrine, to which their political actions are deliberately related at every step. They are convinced that theirs is the final and highest dialectical form of political organization, while the bourgeois democracies are on the preceding level of dialectical conflict, and, therefore, doomed. It then is logical that they are anxiously protecting their state by every device of antiquated sovereignty from being drawn into a partnership or solidarity with those obsolete democracies, as the Charter of the United Nations seemed to anticipate. Still less must the

Soviet be permitted to be out-voted by a majority of antiquated states; hence the unexpected frequency in the use of the veto, which is expressly linked by the Russians to their principle of sovereignty. One may regret all this; one may not have expected it in such drastic forms; but the student, for one, cannot be quite surprised at it.

But it is time to make the point that the dialectic at the hands of the Russians has lost its Hegel-Marxist character in one most important respect which the Hegelian terminology uses admirably to express in the untranslatable word *aufheben*. This word means to lift up either for removal or for preservation, and in the dialectical sense for both. (The literally corresponding English word, to raise, means approximately opposite thing in the idioms, to raise a family and to raise the siege.) The idea was that, while the forms of the lower stage are overcome and eliminated by those of the higher stage, the achievements of the lower stage are based on and preserved in the higher form precisely because it is higher and more comprehensive. For a lower stage, in the optimistic-progressive picture, is not bad; it is a necessary positive step, without which the following steps upwards could not be taken, because that former step develops one of the prerequisites of the later steps. The all-important application, of course, is to the relationship between capitalism and socialism, where the achievements of capitalism become essential for the building up of socialism. This is true not only of large-scale technology and organization, which alone make any kind of collectivization possible, but just as well of the sense of the individual's dignity and importance, which is, with all its one-sidedness and shortcomings, the great fruit of liberalism. The social principle of capitalism expressed it in a limited,

socially discriminatory way, but as capitalism is overcome the individual's independence is overcome only in its particular form. It ceases only being a prerogative, but it is now universalized in the higher and more comprehensive organization. It is both removed and preserved.

Karl Marx's philosophical writings from his early years develop the point at great length in his doctrine of the development from the original primitive self-realization of man, through various stages of self-alienation, to the final consummation in mature self-realization. But the classical passage, which must appear obscure and contradictory the non-dialectician, is the Marxist definition, in the decisive chapter of the *Kapital*, of what socialization is to accomplish: it is, he says, "to restore private property . . . on the basis of the common possession of the earth and the means of production." In this passage the common possession of the earth and the means of production stands for what is normally understood as socialization; "the restoration of private property" suggests the human end which the common possession of the earth and the means of production is to serve, the Jeffersonian economic basis of personal independence. Socialization is not only opposed to but also connected with private property, in that the human possibilities of private property, which were reserved for a limited number of owners and withheld from non-owners, are made universally available by being put "on the basis of the common possession of the earth and the means of production."

Socialism, hence, really is the higher form; if it did not continue the values of personal independence in the new comprehensive community, it would be nothing but the opposite form. This would bring it nearer the normal use of the dialectical pattern of thinking, where Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics teach the cycle of aristocratic, democratic, and tyrannical governments, the drawbacks of each of them driving people to the next, without any

implication of improvement. If socialism produces larger quantities of goods than pre-capitalist society and produces them without the exploitation which was the motive in capitalism, then socialism is the higher form to that extent; but if this rise costs mankind the sense of personal dignity and importance which was the glory of capitalism, then this loss has to be deducted from that gain, and the net result is in doubt. The Soviet constitution, in its emphasis on the rights of the individual, claims for itself the progressively rising dialectic, as the Russians claim it for their form of state, when they call it "new democracy."

But the claim is not justified; the values of individualism are not preserved in the new set-up. It becomes clear that the progressive implications of the dialectic, as any belief in more or less automatic progress, were too optimistic. As society, prompted by the shortcomings of one form of organization, moves to another one, the achievements of the former may be lost with its deficiencies—there is no logical or dialectical necessity for them to be preserved in the later form. We do not see that any sense of personal independence is preserved in Russia or that there is any attempt of those in control to cultivate or encourage it. A most startling example has recently been given by the Soviet's refusal to permit the emigration of Russian-born women who had married British and Canadian officers, on the ground that these women were supposed to bear children for Russia, not for Canada. Even the Nazis have never gone that far in international relations in proclaiming the supremacy of the national collective over the personal life of the individual. The literature and the theater make it clear that it is the work collective to which the individual owes allegiance and whose change of location, for instance, determines his removal from one place of residence to the other, even if this means the tearing up of the family. The national collective, of course, is the political form of the work collective; but in the dialectical change of importance be-

tween economic and political forms one may doubt which is now primary. The expulsion of the Germans, Nazis or anti-Nazis indiscriminately, from East Prussia makes sense only in the context of a fierce nationalism, unrelated even to economic objectives, and so do the Slav Congresses and the emphasis on a Slav bloc.

The great socialist claim, of course, is that the elimination of private profit, the emancipation of the workers from the supremacy of capital, gives them that individual independence which private property withholds from them. But this is true only if economic oppression is the only thinkable form of oppression; else it is quite possible for a man to receive the full product of his labor without feeling personally free to worship God, or to marry a foreign woman, or to oppose the official candidates at elections, or to criticize the economic interpretation of history. In other words, only with the narrowest understanding of the economic interpretation of history can the problem of progressive dialectic be made to disappear. But as Marx's own argument makes clear, socialization of property is only the condition to make individual independence possible; it does not make it inevitable, it is not a guarantee. Otherwise original tribal community of property would have been an organization of individual independence, which it clearly was not; the historical contribution of capitalism was to emancipate man, even though economic exploitation persisted!

The result is that the dialectic has lost, at the hands of its present users, the claim of transforming and synthesizing, on the highest and all inclusive plane, the historical achievements which were opposed to one another on the preceding stages of limited organizations. The dialectical promise had been for a community of the free—a synthesis of individualism and collectivism which must be something higher than either one. As it is, history at the hands of communism is made to move from individualism to collectivism, its opposite on the same plane; a more recent, but not, in human terms, a higher form. The liberal socialists are right in protesting against this betrayal of the liberal heritage in the dialectic. Unfortunately, they themselves are misled by their attitude of protest into a one-sided emphasis on their liberalism at the expense of their socialism, to the extent of defending the freedom of such indefensible claims as those of Polish feudal lords and Fascist generals. In the light of the dual betrayal of the dialectic, the brave struggle of the European socialists, both Marxist and Christian, assumes strategic importance. From England to Czechoslovakia, where the dominant communist party is committed to a program combining socialization and individual freedom, the heroic attempt is deliberately to realize socialism as a form of western freedom, just because that freedom can be lost and surely would be lost if it were taken for granted.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND DISPOSITION OF GOODS¹

By PAUL LEHMANN

Justification defines the possibility of right living. When the Reformation declares that this possibility occurs *sola gratia—sola fide*, it claims to offer the only proper account of Biblical religion and human experience. The claim may be false. But there can be no doubt about what it is. And when we consider what Christianity has to say about property, it is, in my opinion, no small matter whether one regards the Reformation as, on the whole, an historical misfortune, offering at best a few grains of wheat amidst stacks of chaff; or whether one regards the Reformation as the correction and continuation of the true Catholic tradition. The argument of this essay will rest upon the latter alternative. And the aim will be to try to show, at the instance of the disposition of goods, that this alternative is both correct and relevant to what we, as Christians, are called upon to do today.

Property is that which is owned. This goes all the way from real estate to copyright, from the stuff of the earth to the fruits of the spirit. Ownership is the relation of belonging. It is a dual condition, involving both the things of this world, regarded as goods, and the right of possession and use of these goods. Therefore, in so far as property is a problem, the focus of concern is—not the goods in themselves, but—the right of possession and use. Something has gone wrong with the relation of belonging. There are many ways of describing this dislocation. But I should like to submit the following proposition and its corollary. The proposition

is this: *the relation of belonging goes wrong whenever the right of possession and the right of use fail to correspond. And the corollary is this: the right of possession and the right of use fail to correspond whenever the right of possession determines the right of use; accordingly, the restoration of this correspondence requires that the right of use shall determine the right of possession.* Thus, the disposition of goods is the key to the solution of the problem of property, and the critical question is: what are the presuppositions and conditions in terms of which goods may be said to be rightly disposed?

The answer of the Reformation to this question is that justification by faith defines the presuppositions and the conditions in terms of which goods may be said to be rightly disposed. This answer has a three-fold bearing upon the problem of property.

In the first place, it means that the problem of property is part of the problem of sin. It is the fallen world, not the world as it was created, in which the dislocation between the possession and the use of the goods of the world has occurred. Sin is the cause of the problem of property, because sin is the transgression of the limit set for man in the world by God the Creator, the consequence of which is a struggle over sovereignty which effectively prevents man from discerning what really belongs to whom, and from living accordingly. This struggle is perennially destructive, so that if man is really to find again the limit in terms of which he can know what belongs to whom and live accordingly, he must be able to count upon some possibility beyond himself and his world. The significance of this correlation between a

¹ This article is adapted from a chapter on "The Standpoint of the Reformation," which is included in a symposium on *Christianity and Property*, edited by Joseph E. Fletcher. It appears here with the permission of the Westminster Press, which is publishing the book this month.

distorted sense of ownership and the transgression of the constitutive limit of man's life in the world is that the problem of property is essentially a religious problem, and not an economic or social one, important as those aspects of the problem are.

In the second place, the bearing of justification upon the disposition of goods means that the problem of property is part of the problem of redemption. It is in this world—and not some other one—that the possibility of living within such limits as will make ownership a blessing rather than a curse is actually open to man. This possibility is bestowed upon man when God in Christ forgives man his sin. Luther was fond of declaring that the heart of man was turned within itself—*cor incurvatum in se ipse*—and he was at one with Calvin in noting that the world, instead of being the plain avenue for the recognition of the nature and the will of God, leads man into the most amazing idolatries and a constant shuttle between intolerable tyrannies and anarchies. The Incarnation and the Atonement are an attack upon this unhappy curvature and all its works. They mean that justification, although it is not a possibility inherent in man or nature, nevertheless occurs in the world of man and nature, and can be the decisive factor in the practical reckoning of life. To reckon with one's justification is to move into a new order and a new sovereignty which are not yet triumphant but which are nevertheless real and effective. The significance of this correlation between the recovery of the proper limit for right ownership and a new order and sovereignty in the world is that the solution of the problem of property is a christological solution, and not an educational or political one, important as those aspects of the problem are.

In the third place, when the Reformation defines the presuppositions and conditions in terms of which goods may be said to be rightly disposed with reference to justification by faith, it means that the problem of property is part of the problem of the Church. Justification affirms the

forgiveness of the sinner but it does not promise the eradication of sin. Indeed, precisely the converse is true. Justification is the basis for the hope and the resources of meaningful life in the midst of continuing sin. The new order and sovereignty in the world, regarded as the Kingdom of Christ, do not eliminate contending sovereignties but war against them and herald their approaching doom. But meanwhile there is an interim. According to the Reformation this interim is inaugurated for the world by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and for the individual upon his justification. This interim is consummated both for the world and for the individual at the final judgment. During this interim, the justified man strives to make his calling and election sure and to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. And one of the distinguishing marks of this endeavor is the way he possesses and uses what he owns. The Reformers are clear as can be that this endeavor can be neither private nor profane. If it is private, it begets perfectionist extremes; if it is profane, it begets ever new perversions of ownership. Consequently, the Church is the interim area in which the faith and the duty of the believer concerning property—and not only property—are expressed and safeguarded against both extremes. When the Reformation lifts the problem of property into this interim, it separates itself sharply both from secularism and from Catholicism. Secular thought about property tends either toward a utopian solution of the interim character of the problem or toward a disregard of the interim, in which case the problem is viewed as perennial and without solution. Catholicism, on the other hand, correctly regards the problem of property as a problem of the interim but it regards the faith and the duty of the believer as *defined by* rather than merely *expressed in* the Church. This means that for Catholicism the Church determines the nature of justification instead of justification determining the nature of the Church. So far as the problem of property is concerned, this distinction makes all the difference in the world.

It is the difference between an amelioristic and a revolutionary attack upon the disparity between possession and use in the disposition of goods. The significance of this correlation *ad interim* between the faith and the duty of the believer and the disposition of goods is that the problem of property is provisionally (e.g., under any given set of conditions) an ecumenical problem² and not a technological or moralistic one.

When the Reformation is understood in terms of the religious and social context of the late Middle Ages instead of the religious and social context of an emergent bourgeois culture, its teaching on property possesses a relevance for our own times not otherwise discernible. A number of considerations justify such an undertaking. In the first place, the teaching on property could not have been formulated except in the religious and social context of the late Middle Ages. In the second place, whatever religious precepts and attitudes got themselves entwined in the individualistic and economic aspirations of the middle and lower classes are paralleled by the circumstance that the capitalistic spirit, definitively embodied in bourgeois culture and society, has antecedents in the Middle Ages both at their height and in the day of their decline. Thirdly, even the religious precepts and attitudes of the Reformation were, in the process of bourgeois acclimatization, admixed with medieval piety and practice. The sectarian problem, as Troeltsch has brilliantly shown, is the critical case in point. Certainly sectarian-

ism could not have flourished except in the soil of the Reformation. But nothing proves more conclusively that the Reformers did not wish to be *per se*, either individualistic, or reactionary, or revolutionary than their repudiation of sectarian inwardness, asceticism, and utopianism. Fourthly, we who live in the day of the decline of bourgeois culture ought to be able to appreciate with both vividness and sobriety the position of the Reformers in the day of the decline of medieval culture. The task of assessing correctly the bearing of the past upon the future, of articulating a rediscovered faith amidst the conflicting pressures and duties of a society in transition, of making immediate decisions with insufficient grasp of their consequences, would seem to be beyond human wisdom and strength. Such a task compels the humbler course of rigorous preoccupation with the fundamentals of the Christian faith and a halting application of it to the glaring issues of the day. And finally, there are at least two medieval categories which also informed the teaching of the Reformation and which, because of their special bearing upon the problem of property, may serve as instruments for the re-fashioning of our thinking upon the total problem of Christianity and Property. These categories are: the idea of the *corpus christi* and the idea of the *corpus christianum*. And it is perhaps as heartening as it was inevitable that precisely these two categories should be dominating the ecumenical discussion that has been going on notwithstanding the war with regard to the ethical reality and function of the Church.

The compass of this essay requires that we forego elaboration of each of these considerations. It must suffice to give some attention to the first and the last. Let us turn first, then, to the substance of the teaching on property; and in conclusion to the ideas of the *corpus christi* and of the *corpus christianum* as the framework for the understanding of that teaching then and now.

The Reformers believed in *private property*. This is not because they were capi-

² I have chosen the term "ecumenical" rather than "ecclesiastical" or "institutional" in order to emphasize the *dynamic* character both of the Church and of the problem of property. The Church is dynamically regarded when it is viewed as the area in which the faith "delivered once for all" must be related in a new and meaningful, though also continuous, way to the decisions about faith and duty which the believer is perennially called upon to make. The problem of property is dynamically regarded when it is viewed in essentially the same terms under various conditions and in such a way as to take full account of changed conditions without losing sight of the essential structure of the problem, which is religious. The term "ecumenical" also has the merit of conveying the sense in which the Reformation is the correction and continuation of the true catholic tradition.

talist but because they were Christian. That is to say, Luther and Calvin both recognize that the ownership of goods is a legitimate condition of the life of man in a world that belongs to God. But ownership, as they understood it, is never the exclusive right of possession. This is what differentiates the Reformers' conception of private property from the capitalist view of it. Indeed, one could put the difference sharply by saying that according to the Reformation, the right to use determines the right to possess; whereas the capitalist doctrine is that the right to possess determines the right to use. Possession is in order to use; use is not in order to possess.

Now the reason for the legitimacy of the ownership of goods is quite simple. It is that ownership is a derived and not an inherent right. The grounds for it are neither in the goods themselves nor in the man who needs and uses them but in God who bestows the goods and determines their fruitfulness. The householder, not the merchant, is the prototype of proper ownership. Calvin declares that God "appointed man, lord of the world; . . . And hence we infer what was the end for which all things were created; namely that none of the conveniences and necessities of life might be wanting to men. In the very order of creation the paternal solicitude of God for man is conspicuous, because he furnished the world with all things needful, and even with an immense profusion of wealth before he formed man. Thus man was rich before he was born. . . . Thus we are to seek from God alone whatever is necessary for us, and in the very use of his gifts, we are to exercise ourselves in meditating on his goodness and paternal care."³ And Luther, with characteristic simplicity and directness, amplifies the contention of his contemporary. He seems to cast a somewhat vegetarian eye upon the circumstance that Adam, "in addition to all that food which he had in abundance from all the trees around him and from their fruits, which

were nobler and richer than any we now possess or know," should also have been given dominion over the beasts of the field and the fish of the sea. Since rationing was obviously no problem for Adam, Luther is unable to figure out what use he could have made for this enlargement of authority. But rather than yield to the temptation of speculation, Luther is ready to recognize himself with us as "sunk . . . in ignorance of God and his creatures" and to drive home the same point that Calvin has made. "Nor could he (Adam) need raiment or money, who had all things under his immediate dominion and power. Nor did he need to regard any avarice or expectation in his posterity. Adam and Eve therefore being thus amply provided with food, needed only to use these creatures to excite their admiration and wonder of God and to create in them that holiness of pleasure which we never can know in this state of corruption of our nature."⁴ Apparently, so long as the life of man is ordered by God, the right of use determines the right of possession of the goods of this world because they belong to God and serve, in Calvin's phrase, "the conveniences and the necessities of life."

Goods are to be owned *solī deo gloria*. But according to the teaching of the Reformation, ownership is a legitimate condition of the life of man *after* as well as *before* it became a problem. Luther and Calvin seem to accept private property as a desirable condition of the sinful as well as of the created order. It is, however, not always clear why they do so. Consequently, it is at this point, perhaps more than at any other, that the greatest confusion about the Reformation teaching gathers. A telling instance is supplied by the fate of the word *stewardship*. What was originally a high word of trust has become a by-word of suspicion. In fact, *stewardship* really designates the kind of ownership in which possession is in order to use, because the goods of this world are and remain the gifts of God. The Christian

³ John Calvin: *Commentary upon the Book of Genesis*, Edinburgh, 1897, pp. 96, 99.

⁴ Martin Luther: *Commentary on Genesis*, Lenker translation, Minneapolis, 1904, p. 128. Parenthesis mine.

mind has thus almost naturally found its way back to it again and again. But stewardship makes the sinful distortion of ownership equally vivid, and nowhere more so than when joined with certain aspects of the Reformation teaching. What has happened is that although Luther and Calvin never tire of insisting that stewardship is a duty as well as a privilege, the privileges attaching to such stewardship have always outrun the corresponding duties.

Some explanation of this ambiguity, however, lies in the sense in which the Reformers recognized the problem of property as a part of the problem of sin. The matter can, perhaps, be put like this: a sinful order is a radical distortion but not a complete destruction of the created order. Consequently, the ownership of goods is still an expression and acknowledgement of the benevolence of the Creator. But a sinful order bears within itself the seed of anarchic self-destruction. The ownership of goods, therefore, is one of the ways in which the sustaining limits of the Creator's order are asserted and obeyed. Luther, for instance, could argue with equal candor, and almost equal intensity, against usury and against the peasants on this ground. Dealing in incomes and rebellion are alike destructive of private and public well-being. This is inevitable since they violate both natural law and Christian love. "Natural law says, what we wish and desire for ourselves, we shall wish and desire for our neighbor also; and it is the nature of love, . . . not to seek its own profit or advantage, but that of others. But who believes that in this business, anyone buys income . . . with a view to giving his neighbor, the seller, a profit and advantage equal to his own? Thus it is to be feared that the buyer would not like to be in the seller's place as in other kinds of trade." "The Gospel does not make goods common, except in the case of those who do of their own free will what the apostles and disciples did in Acts iv. They did not demand, as do our insane peasants in their raging, that the goods of others . . . should be common, but only their

own goods. Our peasants, however, would have other men's goods common and keep their own goods for themselves."⁵ But the function of property as an instrument of order against the anarchy of sin can never justify the use of property in such a way as to give the right of possession precedence over human need. Luther declares, in commenting upon the text of Matthew 5:40,⁶ that this is the highest precept concerning what our Lord teaches about the disposition of goods. "Some think," he says, that this precept "is recommended, not commanded, and regard it as a matter of indifference that every one sets out to recover what belongs to him and to protect it by force, as best he may. The command, they say, applies to the perfect only. The defense is that if this were true, the evil-minded would be free to take and to steal at will, and finally nobody would have anything. This excuse is irrelevant. The precept is a command, not to be disregarded because of wicked men."⁷ In other words, private property is a defense against the perils of anarchy; but the perils of anarchy are no defense of private property. It is precisely this inconsistency which makes the teaching of the Reformation fruitful for our own time. For it means that the insights of the Reformers into the blessings and the dangers of property are valid even though they did not push them beyond the socio-economic boundaries of a feudal society.

Calvin, in a somewhat wider context, makes a similar analysis of the function of property in relation to its use. He is talking about the ascetic reaction to the fact that property is dangerous and the licentious reaction to the fact that property is necessary. Again, the argument turns upon property as an order of creation. "It must be laid down as a principle," Calvin writes, "that the use of the

⁵ Martin Luther: *Von Kaufhandlung und Wucher*, WA, Band 15; *Wider die moerderischen und raeuberischen Rotten der Bauern*, WA, Band 18, Translation mine.

⁶ "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

⁷ Martin Luther: *Kleiner Sermon vom Wucher*, WA, Band 15.

gifts of God is not erroneous when it is directed to the same end for which the Creator himself has created and appointed them for us; since he has created them for our benefit, not for our injury. . . . Now, if we consider for what end he has created the various kinds of aliment, we shall find that he intended to provide not only for our necessity, but likewise for our pleasure and delight. . . . Let us discard, therefore, that inhuman philosophy which, allowing no use of the creatures but what is absolutely necessary, not only malignantly deprives us of the lawful enjoyment of the Divine beneficence, but which cannot be embraced till it has despoiled man of all his senses, and reduced him to a senseless block. But, on the other hand, we must with equal diligence, oppose the licentiousness of the flesh; which unless it be rigidly restrained, transgresses every bound. . . . It will be one check to it, if it be concluded, that all things are made for us, in order that we know and acknowledge their Author, and celebrate his goodness towards us by giving him thanks." And from another context, we may add a further check. Concerning the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," Calvin declares: "we shall rightly obey this commandment, therefore, if, contented with our own lot, we seek no gain but in an honest and lawful way; if we neither desire to enrich ourselves by injustice, nor attempt to ruin the fortune of our neighbor, in order to increase our own; if we do not labor to accumulate wealth by cruelty, and at the expense of the blood of others; if we do not greedily scrape together from every quarter, regardless of right or wrong, whatever may conduce to satiate our avarice or support our prodigality. On the contrary, it should be our constant aim, as far as possible, faithfully to assist all by our advice and our property in preserving what belongs to them; but if we are concerned with perfidious and fallacious men, let us be prepared rather to recede a little from our just right than to contend with them."⁸ Here again, possession is in order to use, for the glory

of God and the well-being of man, both body and soul.

But if the Reformers were right about the necessity and the obligations of property as part of the problem of sin, they were children of their time in dealing with the problem of property as part of the problem of redemption. The bad men to whom Luther refers in the "Brief Sermon on Usury," he turns over to the "powers that be." And what is so annoying about Calvin is that every time he wins the readers assent to his account of the function and the use of property as fundamentally a religious problem, he bluntly draws some consequence which, for a socially sensitive conscience, is inadmissible. For instance, the very passage already quoted, brings, among the rules for avoiding licentiousness, this one: "That persons whose property is small should learn to be patient under their privations, that they may not be tormented with an immoderate desire of riches." Now *that* is too much! Calvin may not have been able to see beyond a doctrine that has the net affect of weighting the issue on the side of the *status quo ante*. But we not only can but *must* see farther.

In the teaching of the Reformation about property, this issue focusses squarely upon the doctrine of vocation. The function and the use of property as an order of creation are concretely expressed for every man in the exercise of his calling. A man's calling is the work which he does in the world, regarded as God's assignment. Such a doctrine has the merit of preserving the intricate network of social responsibility from sectarian perfectionism and from the kind of inertia that never does anything at all because it never can discover a point to take hold. But it has had the great defect of providing a religious sanction for every man's lot. The affluent are content and energetic; the indigent are content and frustrated; and when the inevitable moment comes, the moment in which the sinfulness of the sinful order can be tolerated no longer, the outbreak bursts all bounds in a struggle for power that defies both God and man. The real mistake of the Reformation was that its

⁸ Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 646, 647, 368.

doctrine of justification provided the believer with a personal reorientation but no social one. Hence the vocation in which a man expressed his justification left the believer more anxious about the sin from which he had presumably been delivered than about the freedom with which Christ had presumably set him free. This seems all the more unfortunate since both Luther and Calvin held that justification meant that the rule of Christ had replaced the rule of self in the conduct of affairs.

Nevertheless, this unhappy error is not inherent in the Reformation doctrine of vocation. This may be seen from the fact that for the Reformers the problem of property was also a problem of the Church. They believed in the body of Christ and in a body of this world. The framework of all their thought and energy was supported by the conviction that the world must become a Christian order because there was an order of Christians in the world. When then, the doctrine of vocation is seen in relation both to the *corpus christi* and to the *corpus christianum*, it can provide a positive approach to the problem of property which the Reformers themselves did not explore.

Troeltsch has shown that Luther's ready reliance upon existing authority and the fateful duality in his thought which separated personal faith from public action was not due to any desire to sanctify the powers that be or to the view that what happened in the world was no concern of the justified man. In both instances, Luther's attitude was governed by the circumstance that having rejected the hierarchical order of salvation and virtue which had made possible the Catholic correlation of the *corpus christi* and the *corpus christianum*, he adopted instead the view that Christian faith and duty were incumbent upon the whole man in the totality of his existence every moment. Having thus carried the tension between the demands of the gospel and the recalcitrance of the world into the soul of the believer, Luther could only despair of the world in the certain hope of

the eventual triumph of the rule of Christ. The sectarian inclination to regard this triumph as already accomplished for the believer so that the gospel could be regarded as more perfectly expressed in human life than it actually was, or the world could be more completely abandoned than it ought to be, was, in Luther's judgment, a violation both of the order of creation and the promise of the second coming of the Lord. His way of avoiding both Catholicism and sectarianism, was to recommend vocational faithfulness in acknowledgement of the Creator's order and in dutiful service to that order until the day of its deliverance. For Calvin, on the other hand, a man's calling was not his way of being faithful in two realms, but a way of making his election sure. Not least among the brilliant aspects of Troeltsch's analysis, is his demonstration that for Calvin the doctrine of predestination circumvented the dichotomy between the Church and the world induced by Luther's emphasis upon the saving love of God, and encouraged the believer to make an aggressive effort to conform the world unto the body of Christ, e.g., to establish the *corpus christianum*. Those who think that a belief in predestination and ethical vigor are incompatible ought to study this analysis with care. Calvin's thought thus had certain affinities with that aspect of sectarianism which insisted that the *corpus christi* could be implemented in a *corpus christianum* and that such activity was the evidence of salvation. But with that other aspect of sectarianism which insisted that the gospel could be more perfectly expressed in human life than it was, Calvin had no patience. The body of Christ was embodied in the world and consequently involved in the sinfulness of the order of creation as well as in the expectation of the consummation of redemption. Calvin rejected Catholicism on the same grounds as Luther did. And like Luther his way of avoiding both Catholicism and sectarianism was to recommend vocational faithfulness in acknowledgment of the Creator's order and in dutiful service to that order

against the day of its deliverance. But unlike Luther, vocational faithfulness was for Calvin a matter of working *against* the day of deliverance rather than working *until* the day of deliverance. This explains why Calvinism rather than Lutheranism has become the religion of the bourgeoisie in so far as the bourgeoisie was religious at all, and Protestant. For when you are working *against* the day of deliverance you are more likely to work so hard as to find in material well-being the mark of piety; whereas if you are working *until* the day of deliverance, you are more likely to find contentment with whatever favors have fallen to your lot as the surest clue to pious duty.

But this is not the only possibility. Suppose one recognized with Luther and Calvin that the problem of the goods of this world is to be concretely tackled at the point of one's vocation. Suppose further, that one combined Luther's despair of the world with Calvin's predestinate affirmation of the world, in such a way that in despair, one would hold all things as not having them, and in confidence, one would use all things as having to dispose them. Then, it seems to me, one might avoid the historical perils both of Lutheranism and of Calvinism. In order to do this, however, one would need to bring the doc-

trine of vocation more directly into relation with the rule of Christ. Thereby, the problem of property as a problem of the Church would be first and foremost a problem of redemption. The attack upon the sinful use of property would then proceed from the kingship of Christ, not from the acknowledgment of the Creator in the order of creation. But this would mean that the right of use would really be determinative of the right of possession and that in as far as the structure of society inhibited that determination, the justified man as a member of the body of Christ would be under orders to alter it.

There are reports that the churches of the continent, under the impact of the war and occupation, have rediscovered the doctrine of the kingship of Christ. It may be that there lies in the wake of it a fresh interpretation of the doctrine of vocation according to which the problem of property is a problem of the body of Christ in the making of the world into a Christian body. If so, this could only mean that in a technological society, economic processes and procedures which distorted the ownership of goods, are the ceaseless and energetic concern of any man who has grasped at all what is involved in the fact that Christ wrought for him his justification and now rules the world.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Eduard Heimann, long a leader of the Fellowship, is a professor in the New School for Social Research. His most recent book is *Freedom and Order*.

Dr. Paul L. Lehmann is associate professor of applied Christianity at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Ian Crombie is fellow and tutor in philosophy of Wadham College, Oxford.

The Rev. John Irving Daniel is pastor of the Congregational Church in Union, New Jersey.

Donald Benedict is the representative of the Union Theological Seminary chapter on the New York Area Metropolitan Council of the American Veterans Committee.

Dr. John C. Bennett is professor of Christian Ethics and Theology at Union Theological Seminary.

Roger L. Shinn is instructor in philosophy of religion at Union Theological Seminary.

Dr. Franklin H. Littell is director of Lane Hall, center for student religious work, at the University of Michigan.

RETHINKING BRITISH IMPERIALISM

By IAN CROMBIE

This article is not a defense of the British Empire, nor, indeed, is it an attack on it. Forty years ago there was a lively debate between Imperialists and anti-Imperialists. The Empire was a splendid achievement of responsible civilization, or it was a piece of cynical and brutal exploitation. Very likely it is a misfortune that this sort of Romantic Myth (or the spirit which finds St. George and the Dragon in every political issue) is not much in evidence in Britain today. Crude and melodramatic though it may appear to the judicious mind, it is this sort of extravagance that keeps ideals alive in politics. Perhaps however there is a time for melodrama and a time for judicious reflection.

Since then we have agreed that we are not putting the Empire on trial, we shall not pay much attention to the actual conduct, good or bad, of its administration. What is more important in Anglo-American discussion is the principles at stake. What we must consider is whether there is some job that this kind of machinery is needed to do. Whether at the moment we are doing it tolerably is a secondary question, with regard to which I will only suggest that we are probably doing it well in parts and badly in parts, and that public opinion is not complacent about it.

We can agree further that our chief problem is not with the self-governing Dominions. Whatever questions there may once have been about the relations between Britain and Canada or Australia, they are no longer questions. It is now just a simple fact that there is a close alliance, or loose confederation, of self-governing peoples, whose past history and contemporary makeup incline them to a mutual friendliness, which is the only, but sufficient, link between them. Empire trade relations are not fundamentally a timid British defense against the rough seas of

free trade; they are the natural behavior of nations so closely connected by ties of non-political sentiment (probably most British subjects have cousins in one or another Dominion).

It is surely a good thing that distant parts of the world should be tied together in this sort of way. It is perhaps offensive to the full free-trade myth (with its vision of a world exchanging goods so widely that ultimately everybody is bound to everybody else) that these important territories should waste so much of their energies in cultivating each other. But the same sort of criticism applies to the family, which attracts so much of John Smith's attention to Phyllis Smith that he cannot give as much time as he might to Henry and Monica Brown. To a Christian, however, who realizes that man is not an unlimited being, needing no natural loyalties to bring his energies into play, but capable of loving with impartial warmth all whom his experience comprehends, it is surely a good thing that there are some international ties which are not solely economic, but rest on other sides of human personality. Like all good things it has, no doubt, its evil consequences; and indeed sentimental groupings in politics (such as the various reactionary policies which have toyed with the idea of a "Latin bloc") can have a very sinister side. But, however that may be, we must remember that sentimental Commonwealth loyalties, good or bad, are anyhow a fact, even in South Africa, and a fact which it would take another George III to destroy.

Where the alternative roads are more open, is with regard to the colonies, properly so-called. There is a considerable public opinion here which is sensitive to the imperfection of an arrangement whereby, willy nilly, weaker nations are governed by us; and if there were nothing

to be said on the other side, that sentiment of uneasiness might have considerable force. It was after all largely a similar sentiment, and not a prevision of post-war weakness, which began the process of restoring Indian freedom. Here, however, we move into an immensely complex problem. Generally speaking, we are discussing the problem of the relationship which should subsist between advanced and backward peoples; but between the degrees of backwardness in our colonial territories there is immense variety. Let us, however, discuss for a moment the theory of the relationship of civilized to uncivilized nations.

For the sake of simplicity we will take two possible Christian answers, each with its own attractiveness.

1. The first answer lays stress on the value of indigenous cultures, and on the blindness of the Westerner who imagines that his own way of life is divinely appointed and all others silly or diabolical. It is found that almost always a little study of primitive¹ cultures, and a little frankness about the shortcomings of our own, lead to an increasing measure of respect for the former, and a narrowing of the ethical gulf which was thought to separate the two. One finds the moral virtues expressed in the private and social lives of primitive peoples—perhaps a rough and ready justice which may not contrast so very unfavorably with the protracted refinements of our own methods. Or one may find a simplicity of life, a control of passion, or an unaffectedness of personal relationship, which, to the Christian, are more truly human than our own achievements in these fields. Further, it is argued, a culture is something which must grow and cannot be imposed, and we do nothing but harm when we break down the traditional patterns of life. What we actually impart is not the social and political virtues, which we have only acquired after centuries of complicated intercourse, but the solicitations of superior power and

bodily comfort—in a familiar phrase, “gin, syphilis, and Duke Ellington.” We disturb tribal arrangements, destroying old loyalties without understanding the purpose they served, imposing new ones which the primitive peoples do not understand and which therefore serve no purpose. The gospel, the argument concludes, is the only thing that we can safely bring to primitive peoples, and that we must bring in its own strength, without the protection of the whole armor of modern Europe.

2. The second argument makes a different estimate of the value of European civilization. It allows that a civilized *man* is, from the religious point of view, no better than a barbarian; but, it contends, *civilization* is better than barbarism, because, not in this or that form, but in its essence, it is natural to man. Man is a creature who was meant to cultivate the garden of Eden; he is a rational being to whom the control and use of creatures is a proper, and, indeed, an inescapable objective. That relative control of human affairs which we call civilization is the highest stage so far achieved of that towards which the reason in every man is meant to be devoted. To claim that the crude and primitive organization of society, the slight and inefficient exploitation of natural wealth, the negligible protection against famine and disease, is in its way as valid a form of life as ours, is to say that God did not mean to make man rational, but did so by mistake. What, then, we have to offer to primitive peoples is nothing less than help in achieving what, by their own nature, they are inescapably trying to achieve, against difficulties with which we, by fortunate accidents of climate and so forth, did not have to contend. In offering it we shall also do harm but that is of the nature of human affairs.

It is important, in order to get our theoretical approach straight, to appreciate the truth in both these views. Both, of course, are unrealistic, but if we are to get our aims clear, we must ask ourselves what it is that we would like to achieve, if only we could. The first stresses the failings

¹ I am using the word “primitive” throughout in a very wide and loose sense, for the sake of brevity.

of European civilization; the second, that these failings occur in the pursuit of a genuinely human end. To underrate the importance of the treasure for which we are responsible is perhaps as serious as to imagine that we, the earthen vessels, are made of gold. It would be nice, if we could, not to choose between these views, but to make the best of both worlds, and contribute only the abstract forms of civilization—the idea of controlling human affairs efficiently to the common good, the knowledge of agriculture, industrial processes and medicine—leaving the primitive peoples to find their own expression for them in their own ways. But in fact one can only contribute a form by showing it expressed in a concrete example, and the only example we have is our unworthy selves. To teach an African our intellectual disciplines, we must have him at one of our universities. Our civilizing mission, if it is to be done at all, can be done only by actual contact with our own behavior; and that, in the case of our methods of political life, means by actually being governed by us. The second view is right in holding that our civilizing mission is a valid mission; the first, that it is not valid at any and every cost. Whether the cost is too great—whether the matter in which the form finds expression is too gross—can be decided only by observation on the spot.

From the practical point of view, however, there is no necessity to decide, because the first alternative is not among the political possibilities. Britain might conceivably abandon her colonies; long experience of dealing with Americans, Irish, and Indians has convinced us of the wisdom of conceding self-government, and we have a sensitive conscience on the subject. But what then? It would certainly not follow that the ex-colonies would be free from the disturbance of white intrusions, occurring in the interests of trade—in other words from that disturbance which, because it is concerned with worldly goods and little or nothing else, is precisely the most negative and destructive interference

with primitive ways of life. It would be pure illusion to imagine that any such abdication on our part would be a restoration of native freedom. In friendly discussion we need not be shy of saying that the power of the dollar is at least as great as the power of the Union Jack. It does not, of course, conclusively settle the moral problem to say that the alternatives are equally black. There are actions which Christians should not commit although the consequences of not acting seem equally unpromising—this in the name of the integrity of Christian witness. It is conceivable that ruling subject peoples is one such action. Perhaps our abdication would have immense value as an affirmation of natural human rights. But let us look at the other side of the picture. We agreed in our theoretical discussion that we have something of value to contribute, provided that we can contribute it without at the same time inculcating our own weaknesses. Now the feature whose grotesque exaggeration destroys the harmony of the Western countenance is undoubtedly our love of worldly goods. If therefore our only contact with primitive peoples is buying and selling, it is precisely our own deformity that we do contribute, both by the force of example and by the disruptive power conferred, by our money, upon the most quick-witted or influential members of the native communities. If, however, our contact is the responsible contact of educating by slow degrees these peoples in the lessons we have learned, the position is quite different.² But this can only be done by actual government. If this government is a deprivation of the natural right of liberty, it can be replied that the intrusion of the power of trade is no less a deprivation, and none the better for being unconfessed. It must be remembered that it is only when the political responsibility is fairly accepted that public opinion (including Christian opinion) can be brought to bear upon these transactions. At this point also we must notice that it has for

² All this applies primarily to Africa, the natural sphere of this conception of trusteeship, and only with great modifications elsewhere.

long been the official British purpose that dependent peoples should be given back the form of liberty once they are strong enough to stand a chance of retaining its substance in the modern world—and the case of India shows that this purpose is sincere, at any rate under some governments.

The original motive of imperialism is, no doubt, far from pure; it is largely cupidity, and cupidity still plays a big part in our imperial affairs. Politics in the West Indies might be very different if we were less interested in sugar. This is not necessarily particularly base as political motives go; but it seems to be written in the signs of the times that the vocation of the contemporary church is a new sensitiveness with regard to political motives, indeed with regard to the whole "Constantinian" acceptance of the historical process. But pressure, not least from Christians, does restrain the operation of unworthy motives. There was, for instance, a misguided but sincere and effective outcry recently about some highly unsatisfactory features in the execution of the death sentence on some ritual murderers in the Gold Coast. It is now the accepted policy of the Colonial Office that our position in our African colonies is one of trusteeship, of government in the interest of the native peoples. It is worth noticing that this principle applies most effectively to those backward territories which are governed from Whitehall and less to those which have a measure of local self-determination and a large white population, such as the West Indies and Southern Rhodesia; where a local legislature concentrates much of the power in the hands of the whites. This policy, like most official policies, is not completely effective, but it is certainly not completely ineffective. In many cases for instance there is a firm restriction on the amount of land which may be occupied by white settlers.

How much human damage is done, and how many benefits conferred by this interference resulting from motives thus mixed? I am not going to attempt to answer this

question. To do so would obviously require a very wide experience. Indeed it is a point on which evidence needs collecting for a Christian judgment to be passed. Damage is certainly done, and benefits certainly conferred in the stamping out of such practices as ritual murder (or as the self-immolation of widows was abolished in India), in medicine, in agriculture. My point, however, is not to answer the question, but to insist that this is the question which needs to be answered. It is not a problem which can be discussed in terms of political liberty and the right to self-determination. Political liberty, we are beginning to understand, is a concept which only begins to apply at a certain level of civilization. Under a social code of considerable and unquestioned rigor, and against a background of great poverty, the only liberty that many of these communities enjoyed was the liberty of living contentedly within an accepted framework, to which you conceive no alternative; in fact, liberty from the complexity and the manifold decisions of modern life. That liberty was effectively taken away when the advanced nations of Western Europe began to trade with their weaker brethren in other continents. There is no practical possibility of giving it back; there is, however, an important problem of rendering our interference as little harmful as possible.

The British view has for long been that if you come into contact with a backward people, and in so doing inevitably, by the solicitations of superior power and bodily comfort, upset its manner of life, you must take the responsibility for restoring some sort of shape to the community. I am not trying to put across the view that this was the predominant motive of our imperial expansion, but nineteenth century motives are a matter for historians; for us, as students of contemporary politics, this conception remains as an influential fact. The United States is feeling, I imagine, the same sort of responsibility with regard to the politically and economically backward civilization of China. It is after all from

American dollars and American universities that many of the ideas came that have changed the traditional China. But this responsibility for Chinese affairs is expressed by support of the Kuomintang against the communists, support without which Chiang would, I believe, be unable to avoid making liberal reforms. I am not urging the United States to conquer China; both methods have their advantages, and with the growth of sentiments of nationalhood throughout the world, to adopt the older method in new instances (or to retain it intransigently in old) would be a disastrous defiance of contemporary moral sentiment. But let us notice that a frank official acceptance of responsibility has its merits too. The much abused Government of India in the days of the Raj did after all function directly as a government. We did accept responsibility for its actions; our policies were influenced and carried out by men who had to live among the results of those policies. If we outlawed the Congress, our servants in the Government of India had immediate and local knowledge of what that meant. The same cannot be said of the American attempt to curb the Communist party in China. When the time comes that your rule alienates the best elements in the subject people, then it is time to relinquish your hold; but until then there is something to be said for making it open and official.

It is an open and official rule that can be effectively criticized at home. There is in Europe a growing realization of how gravely other values have been subordinated, during the period of the capitalist dynamic, to the economic. However great the historical uses of capitalism in this or that situation, it is difficult for the Christian to believe that it came down from Heaven for universal application. It has after all the grave demerit of putting the dynamic of social progress, not into a common effort to use the divine gifts for the good of all, but into an addition of individual cupidities. Now open and official rule does provide a framework within

which the growing European readiness to experiment with different forms of economic organization can find expression in our intercourse with backward peoples. Is it altogether surprising that many progressives in this country prefer that many territories should be administered by a British Labor Government rather than that they should be left to contend in their own strength against the irresponsible power of capitalist concerns?

In this connection a White Paper (No. 7030, H. M. Stationery Office, London, 1 shilling) gives an account of one imaginative recent development, the ground-nut scheme in E. Africa. The White Paper is well worth studying, as the following "trailer" will try to show. This large scheme, intended to relieve the world fats shortage by mechanized production of groundnuts in barren areas, is to be administered by a public corporation established by statute, possessed of initiative but responsible to the government. Ultimately it is intended to transfer the enterprise to the local peoples, possibly on a co-operative basis. It is essential to the scheme that good labor conditions obtain, which should have the result of raising labor conditions throughout the affected territories. Native rights in land will not be abrogated—the scheme is to be confined to barren areas. A first class practical example of something better than subsistence farming will be provided, and, with it, of the economic methods whereby more advanced farming can be capitalized—namely large-scale, communal, non-profit-making capitalization. The housing provided for native workers is again intended to set a standard in the localities. Here is something which looks as if it might be as imaginative and fruitful an enterprise as the T. V. A. and something which could only be put through in the territories concerned by a government not uninfluenced by public advocacy of those moral values which have so long had to yield place to the triumphant progress of European industrial development.

This discussion has been a gross oversimplification. Mention of the names of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Burma, Jamaica, Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia will remind the informed reader of the immense diversity of the territories for which Britain is responsible. Very little has been said of India, where the impossibly difficult job of relinquishing power has just been carried through. What is important is not to attempt a gazetteer of Empire, and certainly not a speech in its defense, but to emphasize that, for a Christian judgment to be passed, a very great deal of information

has to be collected and complicated principles disentangled. It is no longer a problem which can be discussed in simple terms, either of the civilizing mission of the White Man's Burden, or of the sin of depriving colonial peoples of their birth-right of liberty. British imperialism is not an ideal solution. A workable system of international trusteeship would be better, but, until other nations can see the problem to be as complex as our experience forces us to recognize that it is, no advance can be made along that desirable road.

CORRESPONDENCE

[The American Veterans Committee appears to be the only national veterans organization committed to a distinctly liberal program. Like many liberal organizations, the A.V.C. has faced a problem in its relations with communist-line groups. In a national convention in Milwaukee in June, a caucus pledged to "opposition to totalitarianism, whether of the left or of the right," won decisive election victories over a caucus objecting to such opposition to communism, and a third caucus aiming for unity. The letter from John Daniel raises one aspect of the problem within liberal organizations. Because of the broad implications of the issue, Don Benedict has been asked to express another perspective.—Ed.]

Uniquely Dangerous?

Red-baiting, when it occurs in a liberal organization such as A.V.C., is based upon the false assumption that Communists are "uniquely dangerous." A far more objective judgment is found in the realization that *we are all dangerous* when we place an instrument for achieving the Progressive Goal ahead of the Goal itself—Communists no more so than others.

It is bad progressivism to put a party ahead of an Ultimate Cause. But even while we judge others, each one of us should judge himself. Do we perhaps identify some institution to which we belong with the Ultimate toward which we are striving? The temptation for doing so is very real.

The Progressive Goal is envisaged by every true world citizen, by every genuine humanitarian. It stands out, like a snow white mountain summit across the foothills of the ages. Various termed, the "Brotherhood of Man," the "Good Society," the "Kingdom of God on Earth," it is both socio-political and mystical, both within history and beyond it. In the closing lines of "In Memoriam" Tennyson expresses the goal of our quest in the haunting poeticism: that "One far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

If, as a loyal Protestant, I place *institutional religion* ahead of the Ultimate Enterprise we progressives are waging together, then *I* am potentially dangerous. The same is true of a Catholic or a Jew. So is it of a Republican, Democrat, Socialist, or Communist. Sometimes the paro-

chial institutional loyalty may be Nationalism or Trade Unionism. Whatever it is, if we permit ourselves to regard the institution we represent as being in some way uniquely transcendent, then we are guilty of idolatry, and perhaps render legitimate the charge of being "uniquely dangerous."

Let us, therefore, resist this common temptation which is all the more insidious, in that it poses as an angel of light. While it may be argued that Communists are disciplined and some are working under the orders of a directorate overseas, this is certainly true of other political and religious groups as well.

Strife within A.V.C., and the progressive movement generally, will only cease when we cease judging others and start judging ourselves. It will stop only when *we stop* placing factional and institutional loyalties first, but rather use our religious and political institutions as instruments toward achieving our common Goal.

JOHN IRVING DANIEL

Perhaps Some Are Uniquely Dangerous

We may agree that "if we permit ourselves to regard the institution we represent as being in some way uniquely transcendent, then we are guilty of idolatry, and perhaps render legitimate the charge of being 'uniquely dangerous.'" The point is that such a statement speaks directly to the Communists, who have come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union and the Communist Party are uniquely transcendent. It is precisely because of this that Liberals and Progressives find it almost impossible to work in organizations which have been infiltrated by Communists. If the progressive goals are as clear and snow white as Mr. Daniel indicates, then progressives can cooperate. But for many of us the goals of the Com-

munist Party are not as progressive as we once believed.

For my part we who call ourselves liberals and progressives have not been institutionally minded enough. We have naively felt that we could enter the arena of political warfare as individuals seeking snow white goals. Far too many times we have participated as individuals in organizations dominated by Communists and have failed to understand that we are dealing with a well organized political army.

From my own limited experience on the N. Y. Metropolitan Area Council of A.V.C., I have come more and more to realize that liberals in progressive organizations are faced with the choice of three strategies. They can continue to participate as individuals and allow Communists to control policy; they can withdraw and allow the Communists to take over; or they can organize liberal caucuses and insure at least a semblance of democratic procedure. The third tactic is the only effective one in the current political struggle. The first two merely hand over the organizations to Communists. Attempts to exclude Communists from liberal organizations, though sometimes moderately successful, tend to encourage suspicion and waste of effort in petty bickering.

The failure of progressive forces of the smaller countries of Europe has been due in part to their inability to recognize that in a revolutionary situation the political arena is composed of tightly organized and disciplined forces with a platform and direction. Just as in physical warfare men momentarily lose their individuality, so in political warfare liberals at times must place great stress on the political instrument which they are using. This, of course, is the tragic aspect of any revolutionary situation, but no political advance has been achieved without it.

DON BENEDICT

BOOK REVIEWS

RELIGIOUS LIBERALS REPLY. *A Symposium.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1947. viii, 177 pp. \$2.00.

This is a symposium by several philosophers whose type of liberalism in most cases is only remotely connected with Christian theology of any kind. The reply to what is called "Neo-Orthodoxy," usually to Reinhold Niebuhr, is as a rule strangely irrelevant for anyone who has even faced the same questions which Dr. Niebuhr's theology faces. The book is written with dignity and with an attempt to be fair that keeps it out of the class of smear literature. (It is not at all like the pamphlet recently published by a group of Unitarians.) Professor Wieman, who writes the first chapter, concentrates on the idea of revelation and the use of myth. Some of the things that he says might apply to Barth's attempt to declare the absolute independence of revelation, though even in regard to that Wieman does not deal with the real grounds for that position. When he discusses Niebuhr and myth he seems to assume that mythical thinking is regarded by Niebuhr as a short cut to truth rather than as a way of expressing a conclusion that is held because it seems to illumine more of the facts than any other. Niebuhr does not neglect reason but he uses reason to show the inadequacy of all rational systems, and he also uses reason constructively to show that the Christian position, elements of which may be expressed in mythical terms, actually fits the realities of our life.

By far the best essay in this book is the one by Professor Arthur E. Murphy. He concentrates on one aspect of Dr. Niebuhr's thought—the relation between the moral differences in history and the universality of sin that Niebuhr affirms from the perspective of absolute love. Professor Murphy has raised the problem in an illuminating way and I believe that his criticism, while it does not do justice to the core of Niebuhr's position, points to

defects of concept and language in Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures. As a matter of fact Niebuhr has made some concessions orally to this kind of criticism that indicate that his way of stating the matter so far is not satisfactory to himself.

The other chapters reflect no more than the usual objections of a Humanist or naturalistic conception of religion to any presentation of the distinctively Christian faith. The only exception is the chapter that is made up of excerpts from Professor James B. Pratt's *Can We Keep the Faith?* That book is directed against Barth and Brunner. It is a good statement of theological liberalism and its attack upon the absolute separation of revelation and reason, upon the idea of God as wholly transcendent, is justified. But Professor Pratt's book always seemed to me to deal in a very external way with Barth and Brunner without really facing their problems. As a part of this volume it helps to create the false impression (used in this way after the author's death) that this "Neo-Orthodoxy" is all one thing whether you are talking about Barth, Brunner, or Niebuhr, or, in the case of Otto's chapter, even Maritain.

JOHN C. BENNETT

GERMANY — BRIDGE OR BATTLEGROUND. *By James P. Warburg.* New York: Harcourt, Brace. 1947. \$3.50.

Mr. Warburg has given us in this book the most comprehensive account of conditions in Germany which we have had thus far. There have been some good impressionistic reports on the state of the German soul. But here we have a thorough analysis of the economic and political situation in Germany. Among the most interesting features of the book are comparative estimates of conditions in the various zones. All the state documents and records of agreements between the powers on questions effecting Germany are given in an appendix.

Needless to say Mr. Warburg is thoroughly out of accord with the viewpoint which informed the Morgenthau plan and proves the necessity of a tremendous increase in German production, if the German people are not to be completely pauperized. In a sense the arguments against the Morgenthau plan are now no longer necessary, for an agreement has been reached to raise the level of industry. Unfortunately, however, the impulse toward correcting the mistakes of the Morgenthau plan, as they were incorporated in the Potsdam agreement, comes from the new division of Europe into a western and a Russian sphere of influence. The one weakness of Warburg's analysis is that he assumes that Russia and the West could still reach an agreement in regard to Germany. Meanwhile the chasm between them has deepened to a point where they can reach no agreements on any significant issues. Much of Warburg's thesis therefore has become irrelevant. Some of it must have been irrelevant, even while he was writing the book. History has become more tragic than even so good a realist as Mr. Warburg anticipated.

R. N.

REPORT ON THE GERMANS. *By W. L. White.* New York: Harcourt, Brace. 1947. 260 pp. \$3.00.

Few people today regard the Germans in their own right. Instead, those who fear conflict with Russia have a partisan concern to rehabilitate Western Europe, while those who can see no wrong in Russia feel obliged to keep alive a grudge against Germany. W. L. White may be suspect on the former ground, but he has produced a notably fair and highly readable book about occupied Germany.

No political or economic treatise, the book is a journalist's report. Although its point of view is being more thoroughly documented in weightier volumes, we may be glad that it is available in popular form. Most of the pages simply narrate incidents or record conversations. Jews, Poles, former Nazis, soldiers, civilians of

various ages and occupations—these tell their story. For whatever it is worth, I may say that White's report coincides remarkably with my own observations of the Germans during the last months of the war, when as a prisoner-of-war I made their acquaintance. But corroboration is difficult, since it has proved notoriously true in Germany that everyone finds the evidence to confirm his own prejudices.

White leaves the impression of a people who were neither ardent democrats nor Nazis, who were hopelessly confused, who for the most part were slow to support Hitler but willing to accept or welcome his *fait accompli*, who if they opposed him did not know what to do or lacked the heroism to do anything. Once again we see the difficulties made for any possible opposition to Hitler by the "unconditional surrender" policy. White shows well the bias in many of the common judgments against the Germans. They are condemned for lacking a heroism which only rare individuals ever have, for falling under the influence of propaganda when there was little way to check it, for simply drifting with events as most people everywhere do. Particularly telling is the reminder that the wickedness of many Germans consisted in supporting a war to which they were opposed simply because they could not oppose their country once war started—a policy hardly distinguishable from that of a bloc of the American isolationist press. But the book is no whitewash job.

A book like this reminds us of the violent shifts of opinion in our era. A few American leaders—including some within our Fellowship—have maintained a consistent analysis of Nazism over a period of years, recognizing its immensity and the responsibility for it both within Germany and in policies of other nations between the two World Wars. Before the war they were attacked by "liberals" as war-mongers who exaggerated the evil in Nazism. Today they are attacked by the same people for being too friendly to Germany. Some of the rather silly reviews of White's book add emphasis to this phenomenon. But

such attitudes are probably inevitable among those whose gullible faith in the harmlessness of normal people makes them self-righteous and hysterical judges of all abnormality.

Michael Straight, publisher of the "liberal," Wallace-edited *New Republic*, has recently contributed this bit of wisdom to the German problem: "Germany is still a vengeful, militaristic nation bound to fascist ideology and eager to exploit every division among the allies in order to rebuild her power to wage aggressive war." (Straight submitted this statement to the National Planning Council of the American Veterans Committee, which fortunately rejected it.) White's conclusion is this: "It is for us to say what Germans will think of Hitler in 1957. History's page is blank before us, the pen is in our hands." It should not be hard to discern the saner thinking.

ROGER L. SHINN

TOWARD THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND. Church Assembly, 2 Great Peter St., Westminster, S.W. 1, 1943. Toronto: J. M. Dent.

At the summer session of the Church Assembly, 1943, a resolution was passed for a Commission on Evangelism to be appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Report of the Commission, dedicated to the memory of William Temple, has become a best seller in England. In the opinion of this reviewer, at least, *Toward the Conversion of England* is so catholic in its understanding and so brilliant both theologically and tactically as to deserve to be a best seller on this side of the Atlantic as well.

The point of departure for the Commission was the situation in the modern church which challenged John Baillie to re-think the concept of Christendom (*What is Christian Civilization?*)¹

"A situation new in the history of mankind, there being now millions of

men and women in all our communities who profess no religious faith, take part in no religious observance, and have connection with no religious institution. . . ." (p. 25).

The Commission does not move on at the same pace as Professor Baillie, however, who is convinced that "at least in Britain and America" there are residual values in the culture which may properly be called "Christian"; their line of attack is more radical

"We cannot expect to get far with evangelism until these facts are faced. First, the vast majority of English people need to be converted to Christianity. Secondly, a large number of Church people also require to be converted, in the sense of their possessing the personal knowledge of Christ which can be ours only by the dedication of the whole self, whatever the cost. Thirdly, such personal knowledge of Christ is the only satisfactory basis for testimony to others." (p. 37)

The time has passed when the whole population of England believed what the church taught; the Commission begins with the reports in *The Christian News Letter* (February 10th, 1943, and Supplement 172) that 10% to 15% of the population are closely linked to some Christian Church; 25% to 30% are sufficiently interested to attend a place of worship upon great occasions; 45% to 50% are indifferent to religion though more or less friendly towards it; 10% to 20% are hostile. ("The Drift from Religion," p. 2 ff.)

A discussion of theological matters might well follow from reading Chapter II, "The Gospel," and Chapter III, "The Apostolate of the Whole Church," not to mention an excellent section on Ecumenical Co-operation. The whole writing is replete, however, with discussions of practical techniques. These discussions begin with a clear theological understanding; they move on to interpret the present

¹ Reviewed in *Christianity and Society*, Spring issue, 1946.

historical situation in which the church finds itself, in terms of both internal factors and external forces. The reader is able to know both *where* things are moving, and *why*. The book is both more satisfying confessionally and more stimulating practically than much of American publications in the field of Religious Education—where what tactical matters actually get attention frequently are obscured in a morass of third-rate moral philosophy.

The Commission early comes to the conclusion "that pulpit preaching can no longer be relied on as the principal medium for evangelisation" (p. 3). Because of misjudging their historical situation, the ministry are frequently afflicted with a continuing sense of frustration.

"Up to the present, those called to the ministry of the church have been trained with a pastoral, rather than an evangelistic, office in view. The assumption that the church is conterminous with the nation, upon which parochial organization is based, seems to persist though it is no longer true." (pp. 40-41)

Actually, just as field preaching yielded to pulpit preaching, so is pulpit preaching yielding the field to a new and more effective technique of evangelism: a group testimony by the laity.

"We emphasize . . . the importance of the cell, or group, method. It is, perhaps the most effective instrument for evangelism under modern conditions. At the moment we see in it the best means of training for witness, as the members meet for prayer, for Bible study, to 'provoke one another unto love and good works,' to wait on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to experience His promised outpouring on steadfast fellowship, and to plan evangelistic advance." (pp. 53, 70-72)

We are thus brought face to face with the significance of such centers of group evangelism as Iona and Kirkridge, and are able to appreciate the long-standing testimony to intentional small fellowship found in

the writings of such Friends as Douglas S. Steere and Elton Trueblood.

For those who wish to begin to apply the Commission's findings to the American scene, a brilliant article in January, 1947, *Theology Today* will prove useful: "Towards the Conversion of the Church," by M. Richard Shaull.²

FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

MODERN NATIONALISM AND RELIGION. By Salo Baron. New York: Harper, 1947. x, 363 pp. \$5.00.

We have had many good studies of the development of modern nationalism, but this historical analysis by the Professor of Jewish History at Columbia is the best. It is a scholarly survey of all the complex interrelations between nationalistic and religious forces in modern culture. Professor Baron not only deals with a vast amount of historical data with great competence but he also manages to preserve remarkable fairness and objectivity in assessing the various religious traditions. The main body of his work is devoted to the analysis of the great religious traditions of western culture in their relation to nationalistic movements. These are considered under the titles: Catholic Interterritorialism, Protestant Individualism, Orthodox Caesaro-Papism, and Jewish Ethnicism.

While the comparison between Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Jewish attitudes is interesting enough, one reader at least has found this study most revealing in its establishment of the fact that every version of universal religion, no matter what its pretensions, becomes involved in the evil of claiming universal validity for some particular national value. This is as true of Marxist universalism, as it becomes compounded with Russian nationalism, as of Protestant and Catholic versions of Christianity. Perhaps even more illuminating is the fact that the intrusion of nationalistic particularism very frequently takes place on the ultimate level of religious

² Reprints available from the Conference on Disciplined Life and Service, Lane Hall, University of Michigan.

hope, in the promise of salvation. Germany, Poland, Russia and every other nation is presented at some time or other as the chosen instrument of God for bringing the very meaning of life to its culmination. The historical evidence that even the purest religious principles never completely prevent the idolatry of collective self-worship is very instructive and rather depressing.

The value of Professor Baron's work lies in the analysis of historical material. The conclusion is not very impressive. He takes the usual evolutionary thesis that the "small scale nature" of man has been

"progressively weakened by evolution," that as modern nationalism has superseded "small scale loyalties" it is about to be superseded by "supernational regionalism." This formulation does not do justice to the tragedy of our situation at all. On the one hand the evidence in the book itself does not prove that "supernational regionalism" has seriously mitigated the fury of nationalistic passion. On the other hand, insofar as this regionalism consists of the two great blocks of power, Russian and western, it offers no hope of solving the problem of the relation of the particular to the universal community.

R. N.

FOOD FOR EUROPE

The Committee on Food for Europe of the Fellowship wishes to report that while many individuals have continued to send food packages, the group activities have almost ceased during the summer as very little money was contributed.

A number of people who have been sending packages have written to ask about the need for continued help. All evidence indicates that the food shortage in Europe this winter will be as severe as at any time in the past. Genie Arbuthnot has written that they feel that the coming winter will be the hardest which France has yet experienced. The *New York Times* recently carried a dispatch in which General Clay stated that the need for outside assistance to Germany will be greater this winter than last. Due to the drought, political situation, and deterioration of foreign credit balances, countries like France, Belgium, and Italy which have

been showing improvement are now expected to undergo increasing hardships. Consequently we are urging our membership, where it is at all possible, to continue to send money to the Committee for the purchase of CARE packages to be sent to needy Christians in Europe, or to take the name of a family to whom they will send regular packages. We feel that CARE packages are the most economical way of sending help at present. They now send standard food packages, packages for children under six months, and over six months, blanket packages, and wool and cotton material packages, each costing \$10. The address is CARE, 50 Broad Street, New York, N. Y.

As previously the Committee operates without expenses and all contributions are used for the purchase of food. Contributions may be sent to Paul Abrecht, 3041 Broadway, New York.

